

# Good vibrations

Broadening its offering and providing new pathways for non-classical musicians, the Purcell School for Young Musicians has opened a new Commercial and Popular Music department, as **Adrian Horsewood** reports

Reaching a major anniversary is a cause for excitement in any institution, but there's an extra buzz in the air at one of the world's leading music schools this year, as the Purcell School for Young Musicians turns 60.

The school's new Commercial and Popular Music department will welcome its first pupils in September – aimed initially at electric guitarists and bassists, drummers, keyboardist, and vocalists – and will offer a rich and varied programme of tuition that will equip students with the full range of knowledge necessary in the world of pop, rock, jazz, and session music.

## Engaging with missed potential

Principal Paul Bambrough explains that this new initiative arose with a reconsideration of the school's educational priorities soon after his arrival in 2018. 'While we're justifiably proud of our core offering, we asked ourselves what we *weren't* currently doing – whom weren't we reaching? We realised that, in particular, there was so much potential among young, non-classical musicians who – with the exposure to the right level of training – could become leading figures in their field.'

'The needs of the music industry are very different from when the school was

founded, and we feel that expanding in this way somehow completes our provision. Additionally, we're always anxious about diversity and about widening access, and we're keen to play our part in tackling what is an industry-wide issue. Although universities are increasingly recognising the importance of this, we're proud that we'll be at the forefront of progress among secondary music schools.'

## Professional expertise

The aims of the new venture are particularly close to the heart of Simon Allen, who will oversee the department alongside his role

A Purcell student in the school's on-site facilities



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